

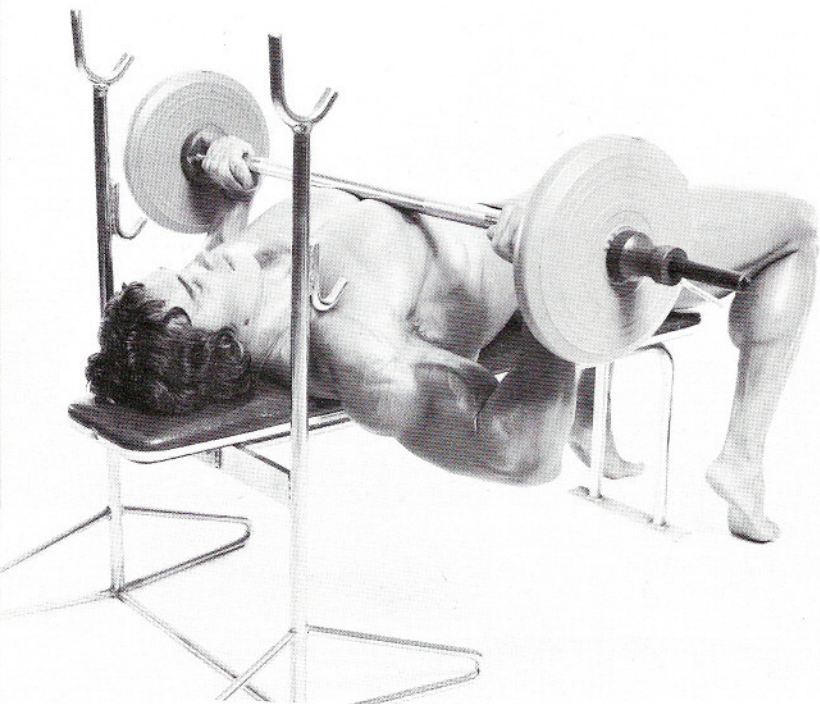
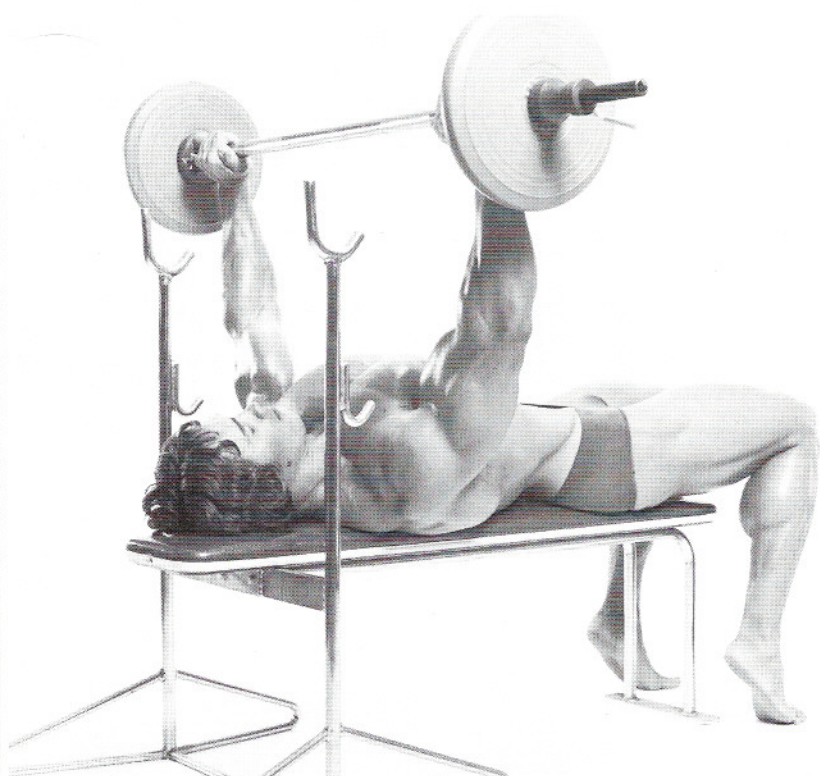
Chest Exercises

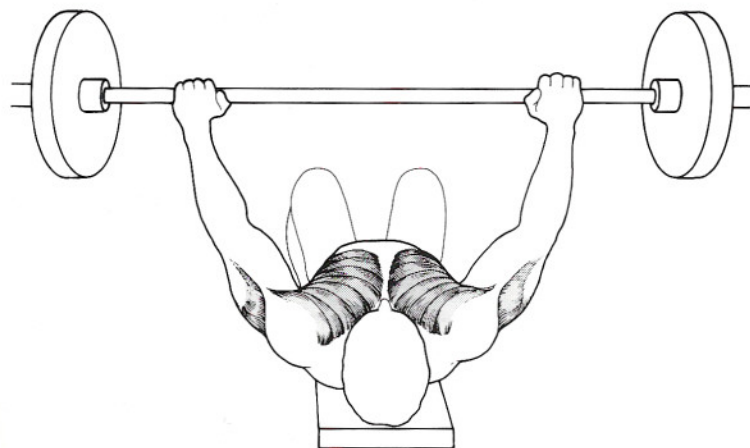
BARBELL FLAT BENCH PRESSES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To build mass and strength in the pectorals, front delts, and triceps.

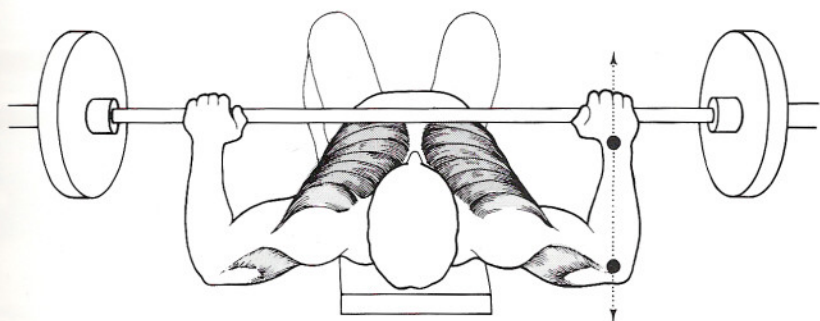
The Bench Press is a fundamental compound exercise for the upper body. It produces growth, strength, and muscle density, not only for the chest muscles but for the front deltoids and triceps as well.

EXECUTION: (1) Lie on a flat bench, your feet on the floor for balance. Your grip should be medium-wide (which means that as you lower the bar to your chest, your hands should be wide enough apart so that your forearms point straight up, perpendicular to the floor). Lift the bar off the rack and hold it at arm's length above you. (2) Lower the bar slowly and under control until it touches just below the pectoral muscles. Keep the elbows pointed outward in order to fully involve the chest. The bar should come to a complete stop at this point. Press the bar upward once more until your arms are fully locked out. Always go through a full range of motion unless instructed specifically to do otherwise.



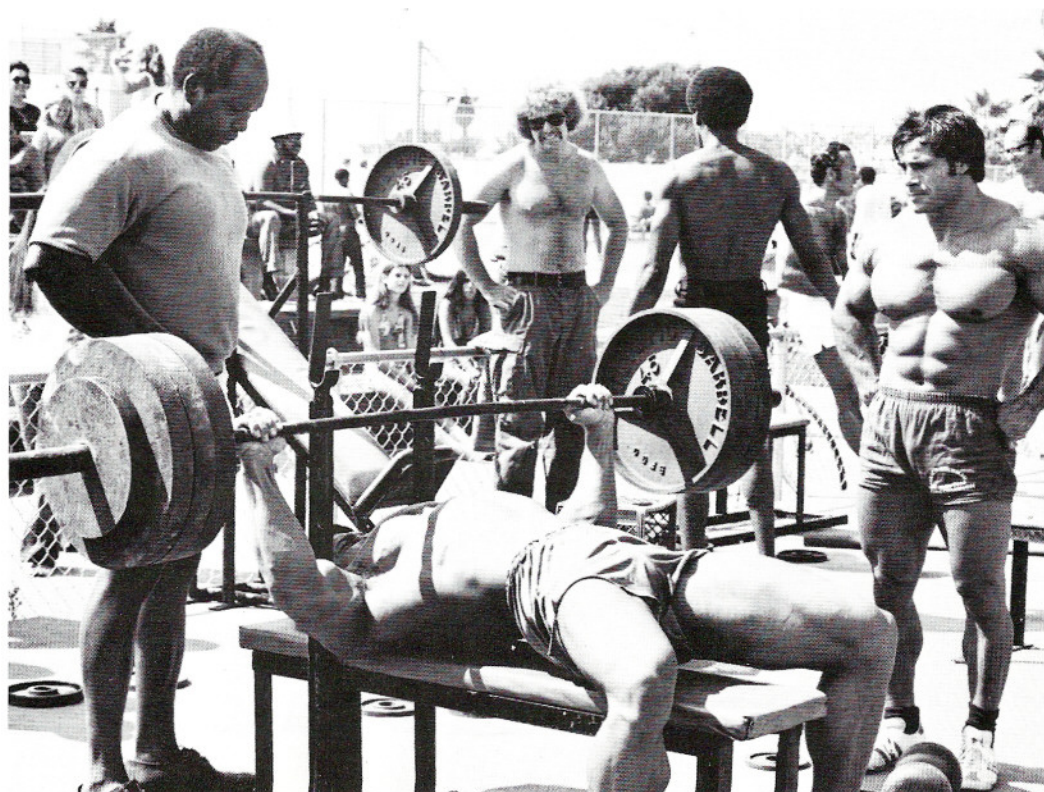


The classic Bench Press starting position: The hands are positioned on the bar slightly wider than shoulder width. This distributes the stress so that the pectorals do a major part of the work, with minimal front deltoid and triceps involvement.



Notice that as the weight is lowered to the chest, the hand position is such that the forearms end up perpendicular to the floor. This hand position gives the best overall results, developing the complete pectoral muscle—inner, outer, and through the middle.

I frequently did my heavy chest training on Sundays at Venice Beach. I got extra motivation for doing reps with 450 pounds because so many people were standing around watching me.



BARBELL INCLINE BENCH PRESSES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the mass and strength of the pectoral muscles (middle and upper regions) and front deltoids.

Changing the angle of the movement so you are pressing at an incline tends to put extra stress on the upper chest muscles and make the deltoids work harder. But you will find you can't lift as much weight as you can when doing a Flat Bench Press.



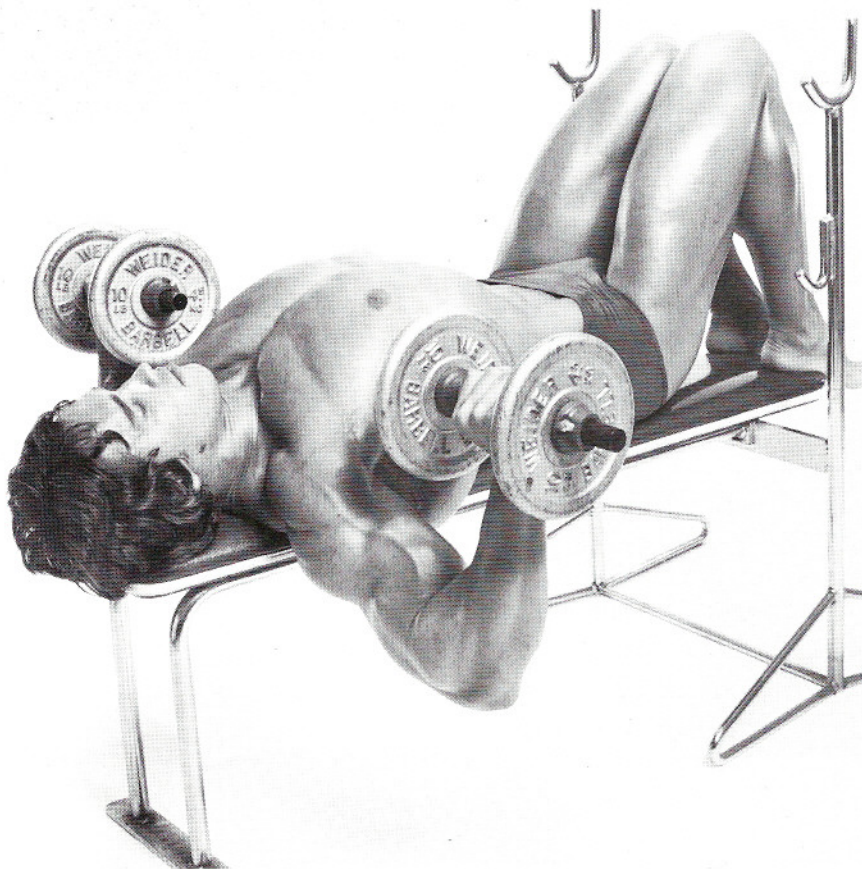
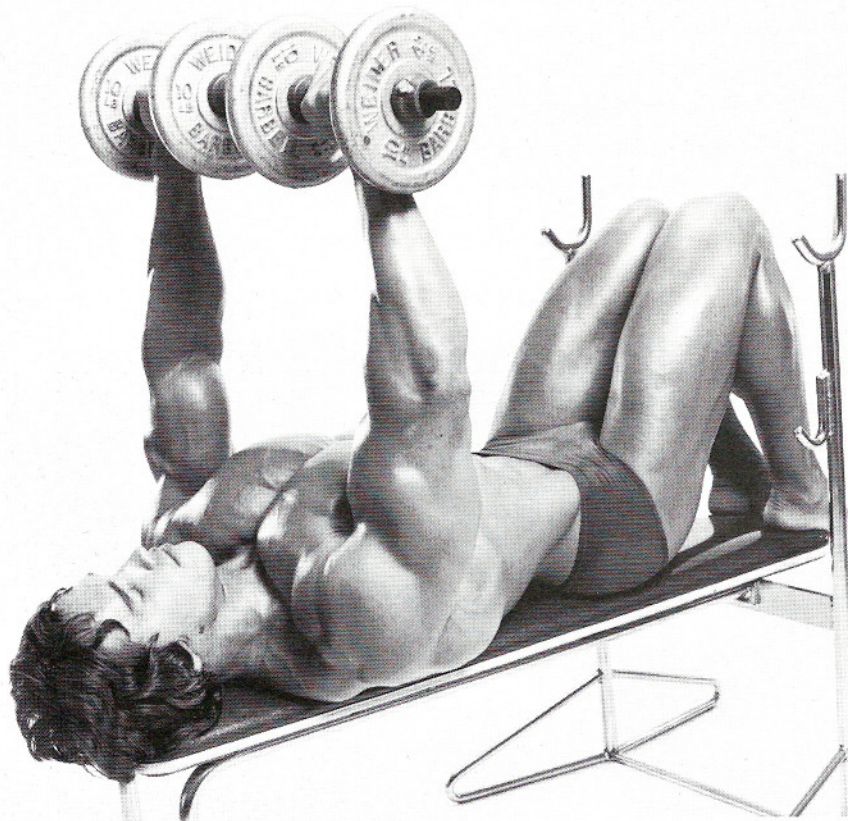
EXECUTION: (1) Lie back on an incline bench. Reach up and grasp the bar with a medium-wide grip. Lift the bar off the rack and hold it straight up overhead, arms locked. (2) Lower the weight down to the upper chest, stop for a moment, then press it back up to the starting position. When working at an incline, it is extremely important to find the right “groove” or you are likely to find the bar drifting too far forward. It is useful to have a training partner to spot you while you are getting used to this movement.

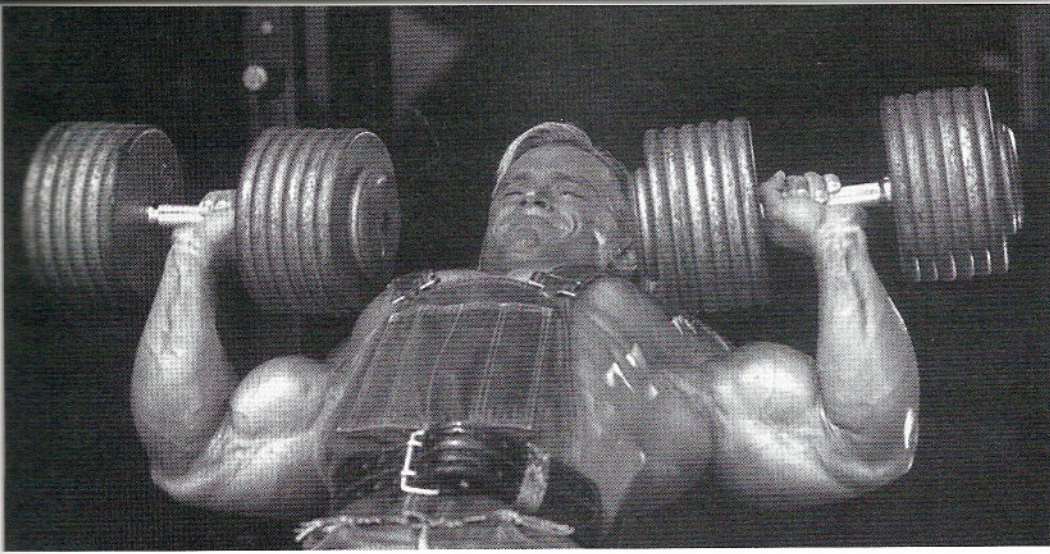


DUMBBELL FLAT BENCH PRESSES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the mass and strength of the middle and outer pectoral muscles. By using dumbbells rather than barbells, you can work the chest muscles through a greater range of motion, and the need to balance and coordinate two separate weights forces stabilizer muscles to assist as well.

EXECUTION: (1) Lie on a flat bench, knees bent, feet flat on the bench or floor. Take a dumbbell in each hand and hold the weights straight up overhead. Turn the dumbbells so that your palms face forward. (2) Lower the weights toward your outer chest, concentrating on keeping them fully balanced and under control. Lower them as far as you can, feeling a complete stretch in the pectoral muscles. Press the weights back up and lock your arms straight overhead.





Lee Priest



INCLINE DUMBBELL PRESSES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the middle and upper pectoral muscles. You can vary the angle of the incline bench from almost flat to almost upright; the more upright the bench, the more you work the delts.

EXECUTION: (1) Take a dumbbell in each hand and lie back on an incline bench. Clean the dumbbells and hold them at shoulder height, palms facing forward. (2) Lift them simultaneously straight up overhead, then lower them back to the starting position. As a variation, you can begin with palms facing each other and twist your wrists as you lift so that the palms face forward at the top, then twist them back to the starting position as you lower the dumbbells. You can vary the angle at which you train from workout to workout, or from set to set in the same workout. If you do the latter, begin at a steep incline and work downward toward a flatter angle or increase the angle set to set.



DECLINE DUMBBELL PRESSES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the middle and lower pectoral muscles.

EXECUTION: (1) Take a dumbbell in each hand and lie back on a decline bench. Hold the weights at shoulder height, palms facing forward. (2) Lift the dumbbells simultaneously straight up overhead, then lower them slowly back to the starting position.

Kevin Levrone



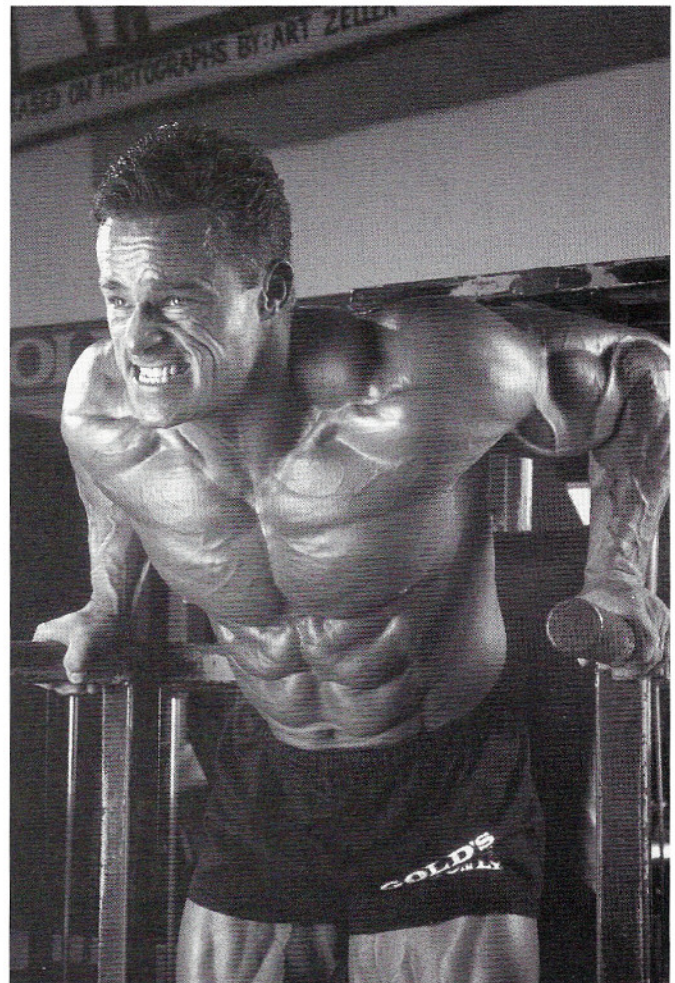
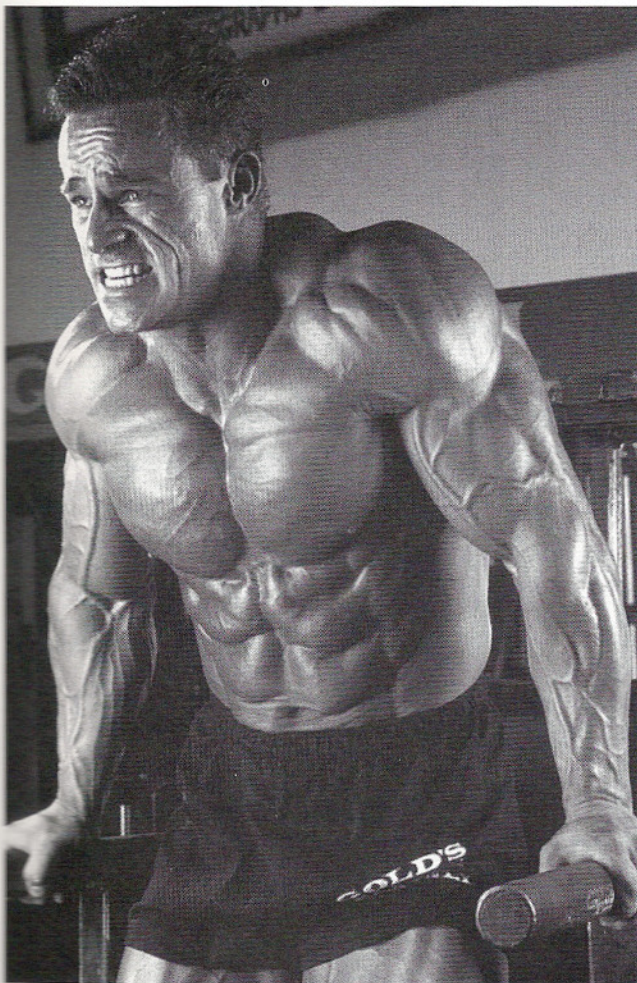
PARALLEL BAR DIPS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the pectoral muscles, triceps secondarily.

Dips are a chest and triceps exercise that have a similar effect on the body as Decline Presses. However, with Dips you begin training with your own body weight, but can continue to progressively increase the resistance by holding a dumbbell between your legs or hooking a weight to the appropriate kind of belt. You can get a very long range of motion with this exercise.

EXECUTION: (1) Hold yourself at arm's length above the bars, (2) then lower yourself slowly as far as you can. From the bottom, press back up to the starting position, tensing the pectorals at the top. In this movement, the farther forward you lean, the more chest you involve, so try crossing your feet behind your glutes, which will shift your center of gravity forward and hit the pectorals harder.

Porter Cottrell





MACHINE PRESSES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To work the pectoral muscles. One of the advantages of doing Presses on a machine is that the machine stays in a certain groove, precluding any need for spending energy on balance and coordination. This is especially beneficial for people rehabbing a shoulder injury. Also, using a machine, your workout partner can push down on the mechanism to allow you to do heavy forced negative repetitions. However, being forced to stay in that groove somewhat limits the stimulation to the muscles.

Flat Bench Machine Presses. The pectoral station of most machines is constructed to give you a flat Bench Press movement.

Incline Machine Presses. Using an incline bench and a Smith machine, you can mimic certain angles of the free-weight movement in a very strict manner.

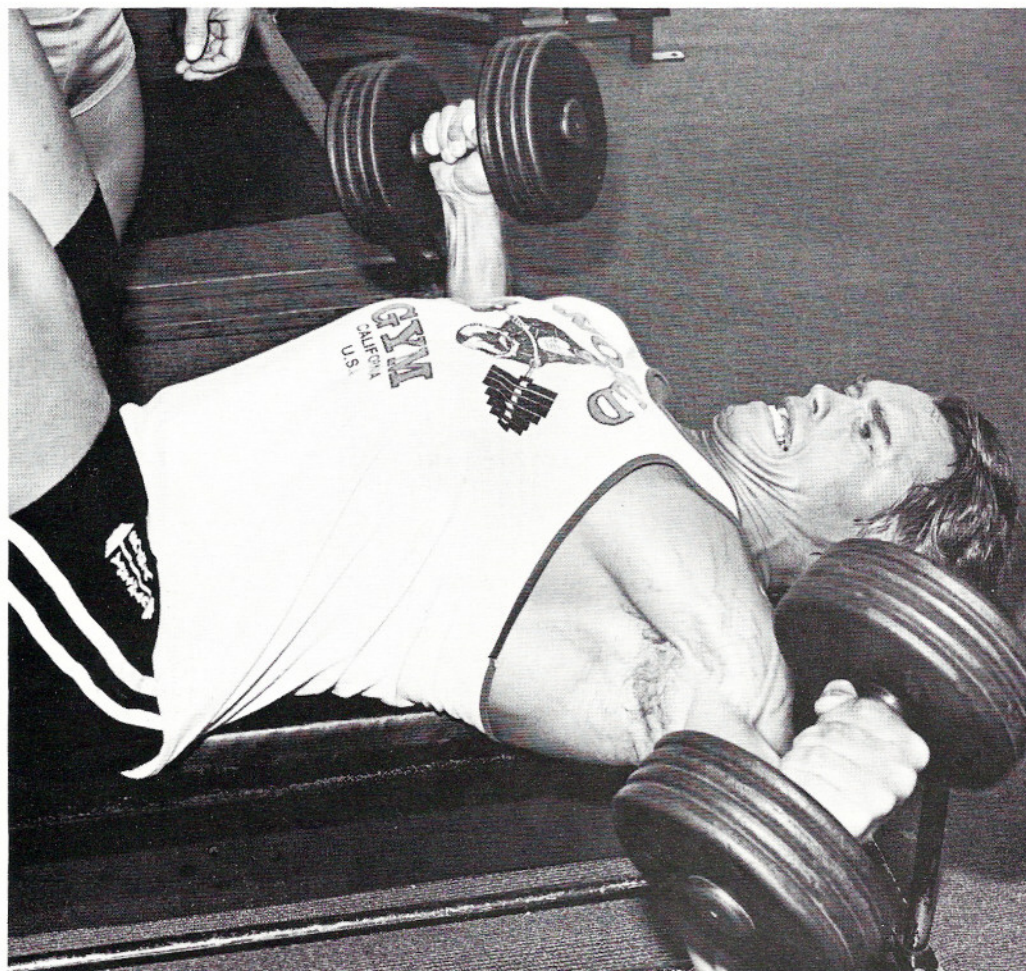
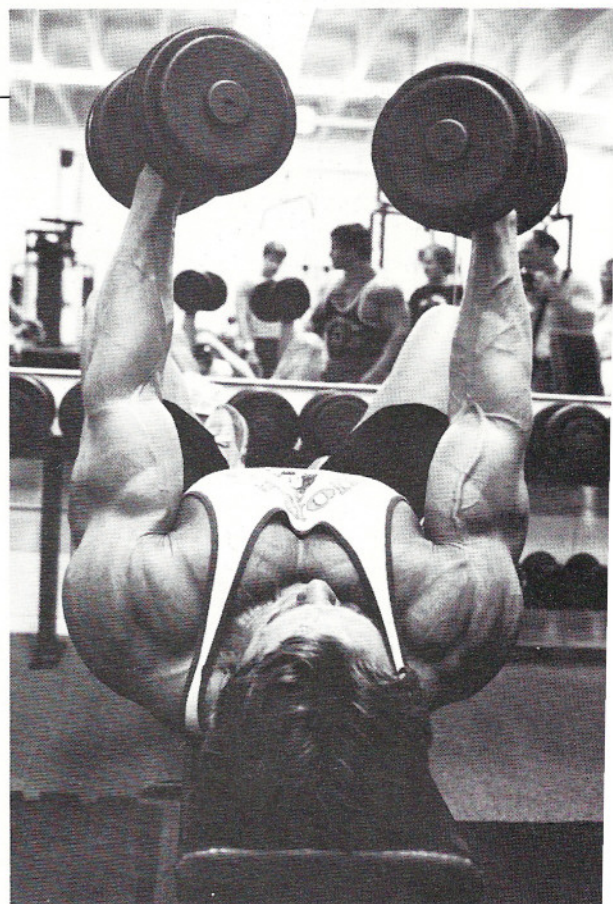
Decline Machine Presses. A decline bench on a Smith machine effectively allows you to press at a decline angle.

DUMBBELL FLYS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the mass of the pectorals.

The function of the pectorals is basically to pull the arms and shoulders inward across the body, and this is exactly what you do using a Dumbbell Fly movement.

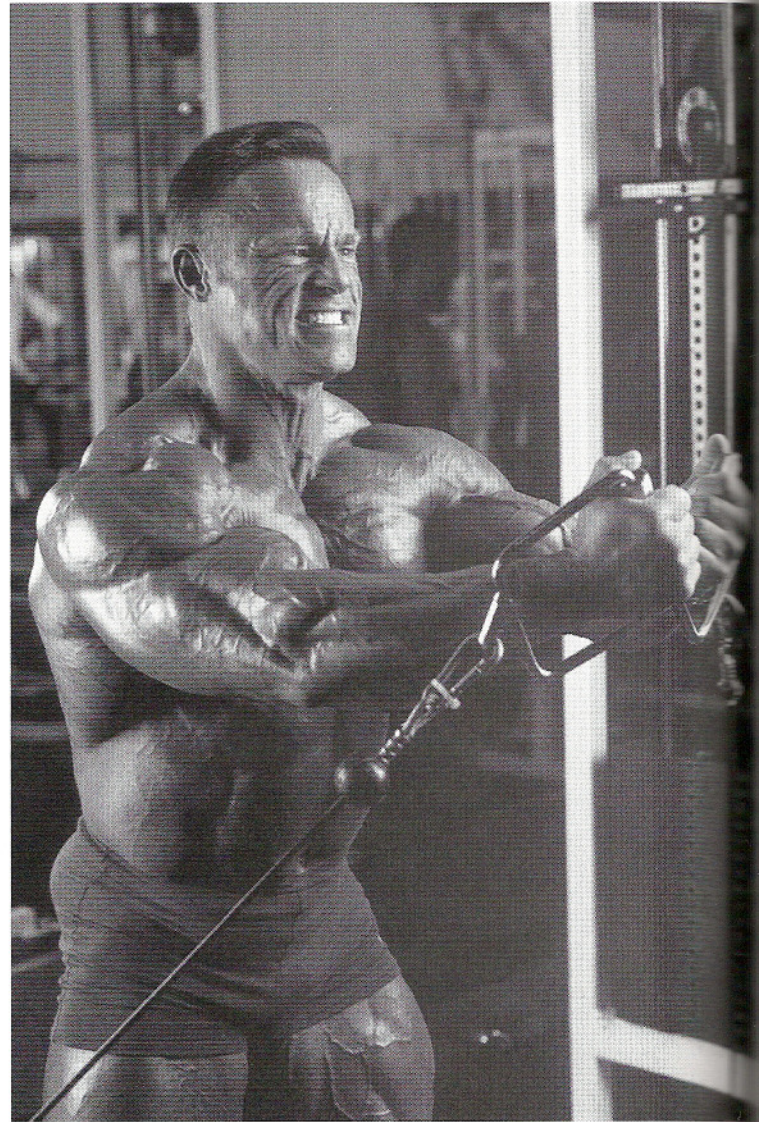
EXECUTION: (1) Lie on a bench holding dumbbells at arm's length above you, palms facing each other. (2) Lower the weights out and down to either side in a wide arc as far as you can, feeling the pectoral muscles stretch to their maximum. The palms should remain facing each other throughout the movement. Bend the arms slightly as you do the movement to reduce the stress on the elbows. Bring the weights to a complete stop at a point in line with the bench, your pectorals stretched as much as possible, then lift them back up along the same wide arc, as if giving somebody a big bear hug, rather than coming in and pressing the weights up. Bring the weights back up to the starting position and then contract the pectorals further, giving a little extra flex to make the muscle work that much harder.



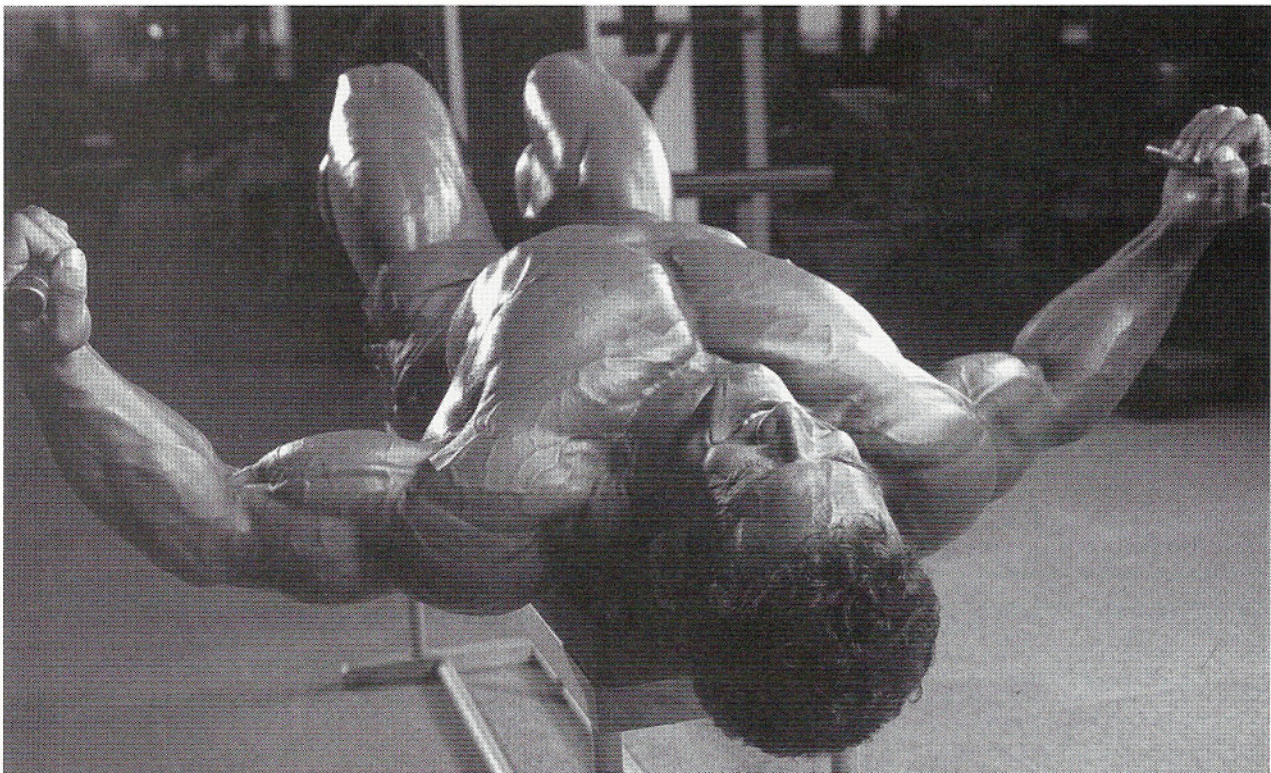
BENT-FORWARD CABLE CROSSOVERS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To work the inside of the middle and lower pectoral muscles.

EXECUTION: (1) Using two floor-level pulleys, grasp a handle in each hand and bend forward, extending your arms out to either side. (2) Draw your hands toward each other, allow them to cross, and continue pulling until you feel your pectorals contract to the maximum. Hold for a moment and flex for extra contraction, then release and let your arms be pulled back to the starting position.



Porter Cottrell



FLAT BENCH CABLE CROSSOVERS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop and define the middle and inner pectoral muscles.

EXECUTION: (1) Lie on a flat bench between two floor-level pulleys. Take a handle in each hand and bring your hands together at arm's length above you, palms facing each other. (2) With your elbows slightly bent, lower your hands out to either side in a wide arc until your pectorals are fully stretched. Bring your arms back toward the starting position, passing through the same sweeping arc as if giving a big hug. You can stop at the top or continue on and cross your arms over slightly to create the fullest possible contraction of the pectorals.

Lee Labrada





MACHINE FLYS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To build middle chest size and definition and striations in the pectoral muscles.

Fly machines are not your best choice for building mass, but are very useful in creating definition.

EXECUTION: Many gyms are equipped with a variety of “pec decks” that approximate the flying motion. When using these in your training, work toward getting the fullest possible range of motion, stretching the pectorals to the maximum at full extension, then giving the muscles an extra, isometric contraction once you’ve brought your arms as close together as possible.



Sonny Schmidt

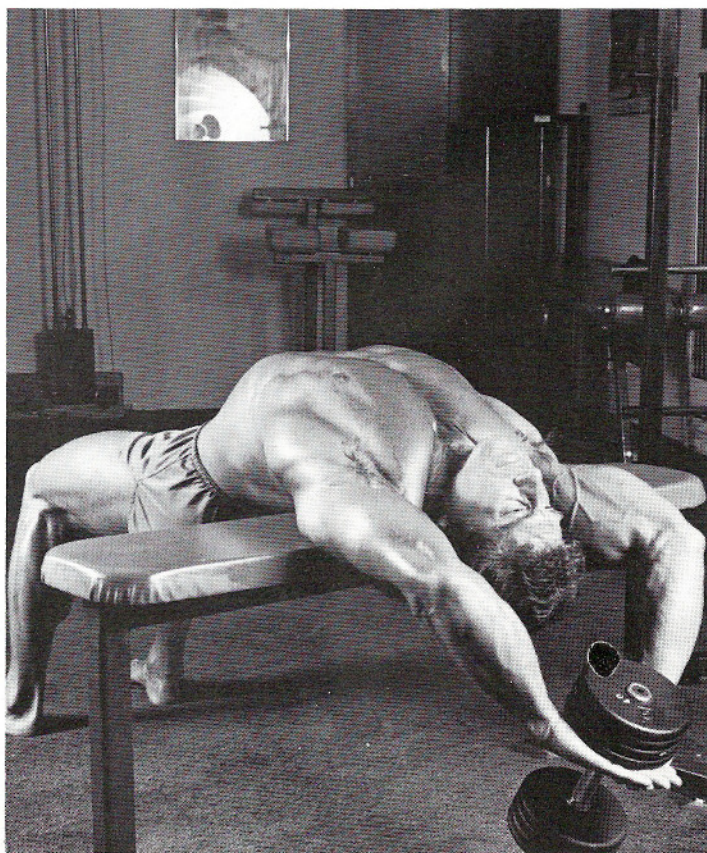
STRAIGHT-ARM PULLOVERS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the pectorals and expand the rib cage.

This is the best movement for expanding the thorax as well as working the pectorals and building up the serratus anterior muscles.

EXECUTION: (1) Place a dumbbell on a bench, then turn and lie across the bench with only your shoulders on its surface, your feet flat on the floor. Grasp the dumbbell with both hands and hold it straight up over your chest, with both palms pressing against the underside of the top plate.

(2) Keeping your arms straight, lower the weight slowly down in an arc behind your head, feeling the chest and rib cage stretch. Drop the hips toward the floor at the same time to increase this stretch. When you have lowered the dumbbell as far as possible, raise it back to the starting position through the same arc. Don't let your hips come back up as you lift the weight. Keep them low throughout the movement to ensure the maximum possible stretch and therefore the greatest expansion of the rib cage.



Pullovers can be used to develop the serratus as well as the pectorals. For serratus, do the regular pullover movement, but concentrate on making the serratus muscles do a maximum amount of the pulling.



ROPE PULLS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To develop the serratus muscles.

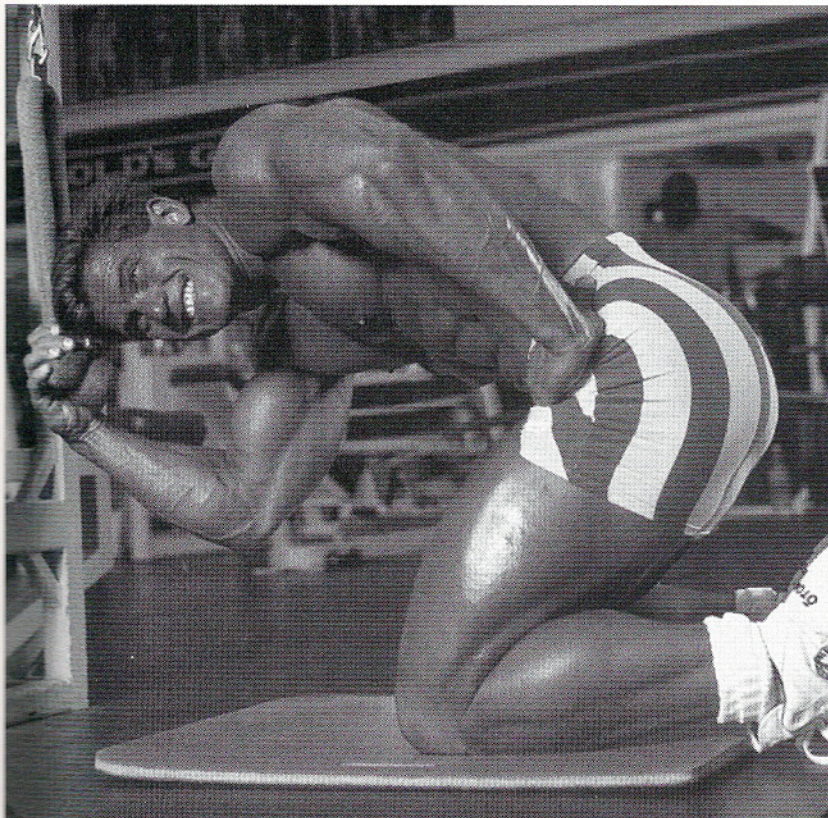
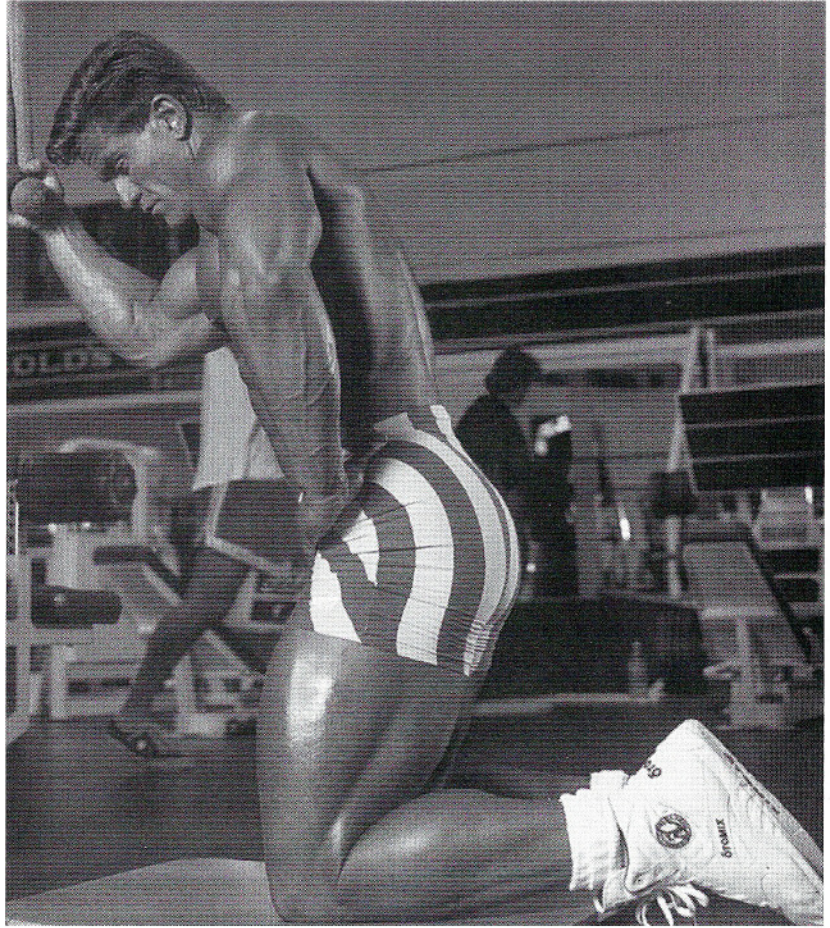
EXECUTION: (1) Kneel on the floor holding on to ropes attached to a cable and overhead pulley. (2) Keeping your arms extended above you, curl your body forward and down, pulling with the lats. Continue this motion until your head is almost touching your thighs. Bring your elbows down to the floor, pulling with the elbows. Release, uncurl, and come back up to the starting position, straightening your arms and feeling the stretch in your lats. You need to be very strict with Rope Pulls, not try for maximum weight. Try to make the serratus really burn by the end of the set—and you'll be feeling it in your abdominals as well.



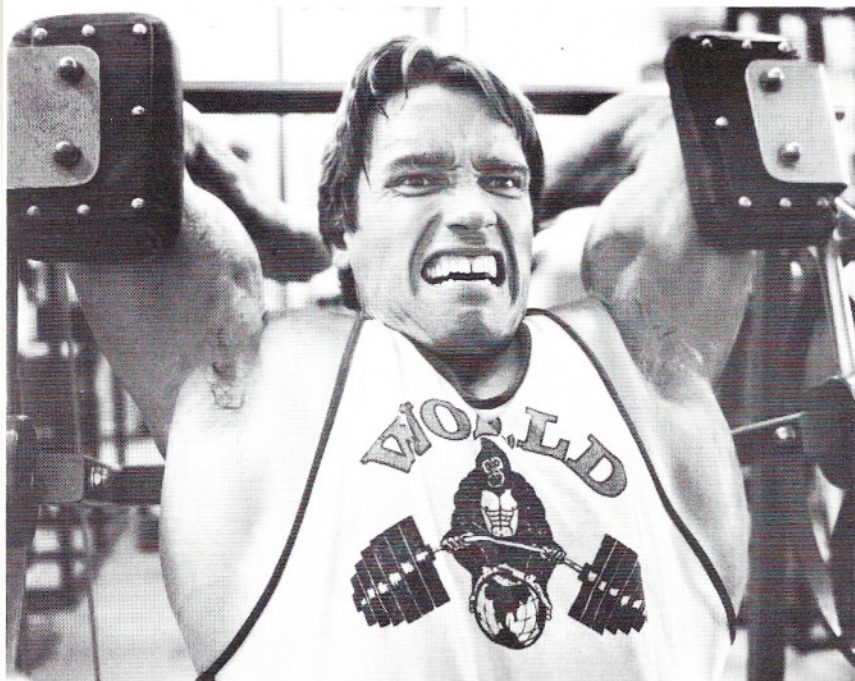
ONE-ARM CABLE PULLS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To work the serratus muscles.

EXECUTION: (1) Kneeling on the floor, grasp a handle attached to a cable and overhead pulley with an underhand grip. (2) Pulling with the lats, bring your elbow down to your knee. Consciously crunch the serratus and lats, getting a full contraction. Release and come slowly back to the starting position. The key to this exercise is absolute strictness. Do the movement slowly and under control, concentrating on feeling the contraction in the lats and serratus. Repeat using the other arm.



Lee Apperson



MACHINE PULLOVERS

(See page 379.)

Machine Pullovers can be used to develop the serratus as well as the lats. Learn to feel when the serratus muscles are working the hardest, and adjust the position of your body and the movement of your elbows until you feel them contracting to the maximum.

CLOSE-GRIP CHINS

(See page 367.)

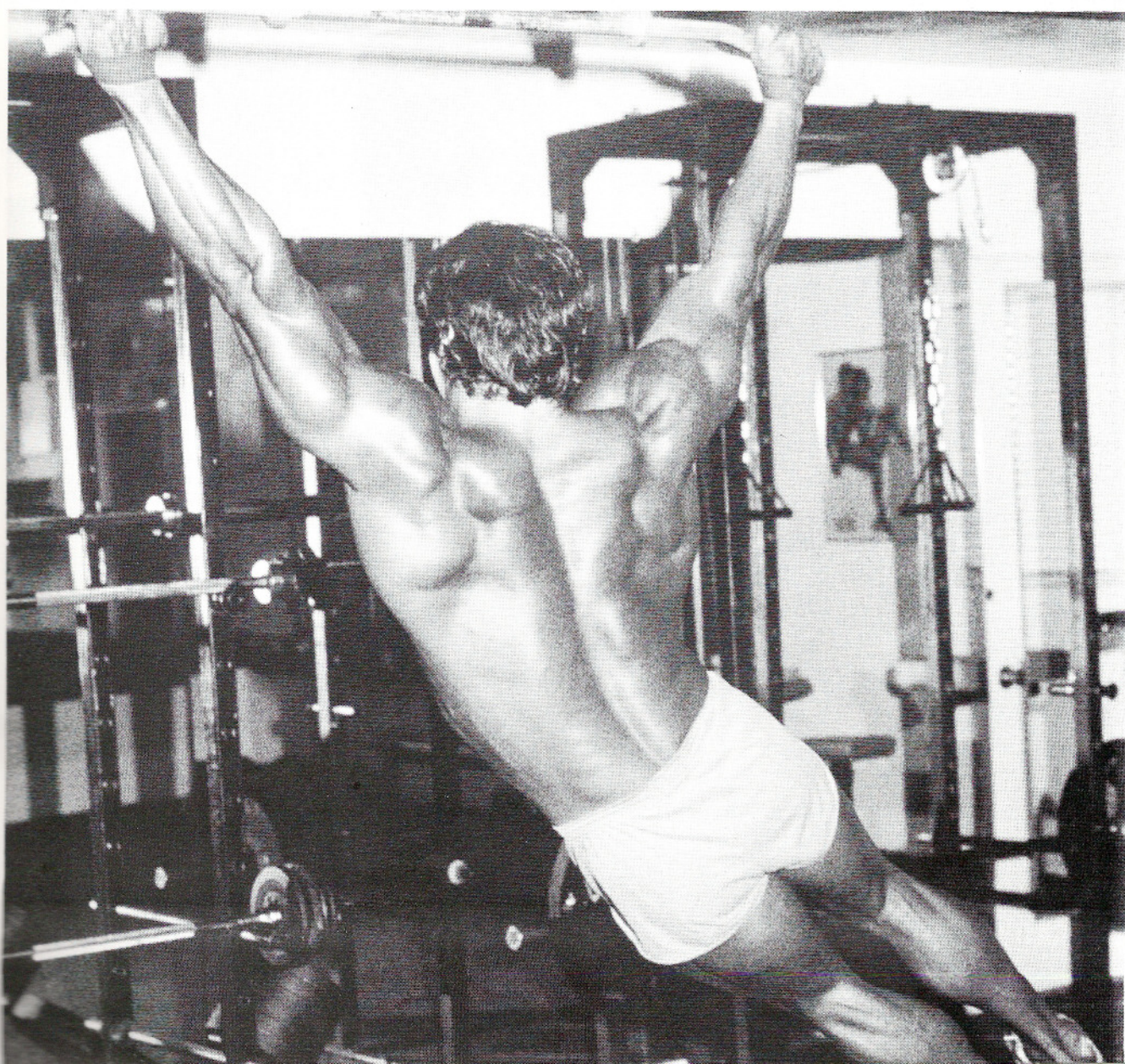
By concentrating on contracting the serratus during this movement, you can change it from a lat exercise to one that also involves the serratus to a great degree.



HANGING SERRATUS CRUNCHES

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: To isolate and develop the serratus.

EXECUTION: (1) Hold on to a chinning bar with a palms-forward grip. (Using lifting straps will take some of the strain off your hands and wrists.) (2) Slowly swing your legs up and to one side, feeling the serratus muscles stretch fully on one side and contract to the maximum on the other. Slowly came back to the center, then repeat the movement to the other side. Concentrate on trying to get the maximum stretch possible and on executing the movement just with the serratus, isolating these muscles as much as possible. This exercise calls for complete control and strict technique. Bring your legs deliberately to each side; do not swing them back and forth like a pendulum.



HANGING DUMBBELL ROWS

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: An advanced exercise to develop the serratus.

EXECUTION: (1) Using a pair of gravity boots, hang upside down from a chinning bar. Take a dumbbell in each hand and let the weights hang down below you, feeling the serratus muscles stretch to their maximum. (2) Concentrating on using the serratus in isolation as much as possible, lift the dumbbells up in front of you. As you lift, your elbows come toward the front, not out to the side. Hold at the point of maximum serratus contraction, then lower the dumbbells slowly back to the starting position, feeling the serratus stretch once more. During the movement, be sure to keep your elbows and the dumbbells as close to your body as possible.

